



BOARD OF CORRECTIONS MEETING – AUGUST 2016

Meeting. The Board of Corrections met August 5, 2016, at the Newton Correctional Release Center (CRC). Warden Kris Weitzell welcomed the Board and updated them on a few items:

- The Newton Correctional Facility (NCF) is currently housing 800 sex offenders (including 75 special needs sex offenders) and 150 general population offenders. There is one wing with a separate yard in use for special needs offenders.
- Changes being implemented at the NCF include centralizing the barber shop and establishing hobby/craft areas. The weight yard is being updated, and ping pong tables are being added. The visitor room has also been updated. A fence is being placed around the CRC as a deterrent, and additional cameras are also being placed around the facility. Inmates at the CRC are involved in training a puppy for the Puppy Jake program, a program that selects, trains, and places service dogs to assist wounded veterans. Inmates also farm 12 acres for the local food bank program. Last year, 416,000 pounds of produce was given to the food bank.
- Members of the 5th District warrant team and U.S. Marshall's Office were introduced and thanked for their service. They had recently aided with locating an inmate who had walked away from the CRC. It was noted that a lot of their work involves working with the offender before a warrant is needed. It is considered that the warrant team is a big part of risk reduction.

Director's Report. Director Jerry Bartruff provided an update of activity since the last meeting:

- There were 32 new employees graduating from a preservice class in July.
- Iowa hosted a U.S. Deputy Warden's conference July 11-14, and there were 20 different states represented.
- The Department of Corrections (DOC) Central Office is coordinating LEAN events to look at cleaning out storage space and personal office spaces within the building. They will also be cleaning out electronic files and revamping their Iowa Corrections Offender Network (ICON) help desk process. LEAN is a system of continuous improvement in quality, technology, processes, company culture, productivity, safety, and leadership.
- Representatives from the Arnold Foundation visited Iowa and discussed public safety assessment with individuals from the courts and county attorneys.
- There have been discussions with Iowa Central Community College regarding Pell Grants becoming available for some offenders in prison. A Pell Grant is a subsidy provided by the federal government to students who need it to pay for college.
- The DOC participated in a workshop with the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber regarding expanding opportunities for ex-criminal offenders through reentry into the workforce.
- There have been some minor disturbances at the Iowa State Penitentiary (ISP), including fights in the gym, in a program building, and in the yard. Staff intervened with each incident, and no one was injured. Monitoring and steps to get back to regular operations have been ongoing since the disturbances.
- On August 3, there was a public demonstration at the DOC Central Office in regard to an offender. The Ombudsman's Office is investigating the claims made by the offender and his family, and he has been transferred to the Iowa Medical and Classification Center (IMCC).
- Work continues on the ISP heating, ventilation, and air conditioning situation. Problems of condensation in different buildings have been reported. The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) has selected a consultant to identify the problem and design modifications. Director Bartruff does not think there will be any possibility of recovering any funds from the previous contractor, and there are currently no lawsuits.
- Susan M. Hunter scholarships were awarded to three children of correctional employees.

Budget Update. According to Director Bartruff, at this time the budget request for FY 2018 will be as status quo as possible, while at the same time identifying what the needs are for the DOC.

- Reduction in recidivism will continue to be a main goal. There was a slight uptick in recidivism to 34.2% for FY 2016 that appears to be mostly the result of misdemeanor offenders and not felony offenders. Resources need to be focused on those most likely to offend, as 48.0% of all offenders make up 84.0% of recidivists. There are many factors involved in recidivism risk, including the skill set of those being released, mental illness, and family/community support.
- Higher supervision ratios are needed for the population of offenders that have a high risk of recidivism. Given staffing levels, it is a challenge to be able to provide the level of supervision needed.
- The aging prison population is also a budget concern in regard to increased medical and pharmacy costs.
- The ICON continues to be a huge resource for all of the DOC and is currently a \$2.0 million budget item.
- County confinement costs continue to increase, and efforts to reduce these costs are being made.
- The budget request for education programs will probably be status quo for FY 2018.
- There are many unmet needs for education, cognitive programs, and substance abuse programs.

Sex Offender Treatment Program Transition. There are three groups of sex offenders still currently at the Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility. They should be transferred to the NCF by the end of October. The transition to Newton started April 26, 2016, and they are currently housing five different groups of sex offenders. Statewide, there are 1,400 sex offenders, with just 140 left at Mt. Pleasant.

Next Meeting. The next Board meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2016, in Ottumwa at the 8th Judicial District Office. For additional information, see the DOC website:
<http://www.doc.state.ia.us/BoardOfCorrections>.

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